

u

(If hell and treason hold their promises.)
 Ere he take ship for France, and in Southampton.
 Linger your patience on; and well digest²
 The abuse of distance, while we force a play³.
 The sum is paid ; the traitors are agreed ;
 The king is set from London ; and the scene
 Is now transported, gentles, to Southampton :
 There is the playhouse now % there must you sit:

Again, in the 24th book [no date] :
⁶⁶ Macus, quider of the mules, discern'd this
grace of men

STEEVENS.

2— WELL digest—] The folio, in which only these choruses are found, reads, and perhaps rightly—" we'll digest."^{*}

STEEVENS.

This emendation was made by Mr. Pope, and the words— while we, which are not in the old copy, were supplied by him.

MALONE.

3 while we FORCE A PLAY.] The two first words were added (as it should seem) very properly. *To force a play* is to *produce a play by compelling many circumstances into a narrow compass*.

STEEVENS.

⁴ And by their hands this grace of kings must die,
 (If hell and treason hold their promises.)
 Ere he take ship for France, and in Southampton.
 Linger your patience on; and well digest
 The abuse of distance, while we force a play.
 The sum is paid ; the traitors are agreed ;
 The king is set from London ; and the scene
 Is now transported, gentles, to Southampton :
 There is the playhouse now.] I suppose everyone that reads these lines looks about for a meaning which he cannot find. There is no connection of sense nor regularity of transition from one thought to the other. It may be suspected that some lines are lost, and in that case the sense is irretrievable. I rather think, the meaning is obscured by an accidental transposition, which I would reform thus: . • ' .

* And by their hands this grace of kings must die.

* If hell and treason hold their promises.

* The sum is paid, the traitors are agreed.

* The king is set from London, and the scene

* Is now transported, gentles, to Southampton,

Ere he take ship for France. And in Southampton

* Linger your patience on, and well digest
 * The abuse <of distance, while we force a

play.
*

There is the playhouse "how—>."